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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

REPORT

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COUNTRY Germany (Russian Zone)

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SUBJECT The Elektrochemisches Kombinat Bitterfeld: Production; General Conditions

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DATE OF INFO.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

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1. The Russians have instructed the Elektrochemisches Kombinat Bitterfeld to develop a foam fire extinguisher with the following properties:

   a. It must be capable of storage for five years.

   b. It must be able to withstand a temperature of -25°C.

   c. It must form a satisfactory foam when diluted with sea water as well as with fresh water.

   d. It must be non-corrosive.

   e. It must be effective against burning alcohol, gasoline and ether.

2. An electric rectifier station is to be built which is said to be for the supply of power to a new magnesium plant.

3. The alleged "Monazite sand" (which turned out to be zirconium silicate) sent to the factory came from stocks held by the DDR. Its treatment was ordered by a DDR agency.*

4. The factory is to produce for the DDR very pure zirconium from old stocks of zirconium silicate. A very low waste percentage (Schuttgewicht), 0.2-0.3, has been demanded.**

5. The new aluminum factory is now practically complete, but it cannot start operating since there is no aluminum oxide (Tonerde) available. The new plant at Lauta will not be able to deliver aluminum oxide before the summer of 1952. Work on the Bitterfeld experiments to develop a method of extracting aluminum oxide from German clay (Ton) is being pushed. A semi-technical plant is now under construction. Orders have been given that complete plans for a full scale plant must be ready by the end of 1951, so that a plant producing 300,000 tons per year can start operating by the end of 1952. Dr. Holst has arrived from Rostock University to assist in the aluminum oxide research.

6. On 5 September 1951, a truck arrived [redacted] with a load of aluminum oxide. [redacted]

7. Research into the production of freon has been stopped. This means that th[redacted] developed in Budapest will finally be adopted. ILLEGIB

[redacted]

9. The following points were among those made at a meeting held on 31 August 1951 to discuss production problems:

a. Chlorine is being wasted. Production of chlorine rose from 16,000 tons in the fourth quarter of 1950 to 17,000 tons in the second quarter of 1951. However, only about 12,000 tons per quarter were utilized during this period.

b. Production of permanganate has already risen above prewar figures.

c. There were difficulties in the hydrochloric acid plant because the main consumer, Wismut AG, was very irregular in its collection of the acid.

d. There was difficulty in disposing of stocks of chlorate because of a shortage of paper sacks.

e. The phosphorus furnaces were still operating unsatisfactorily.

f. The graphitization plant was in serious difficulties because Siemens-Plania was delivering insufficient quantities of crude graphite of bad quality. It was proposed that the factory should not rely entirely on Siemens-Plania, but should also approach Ratibor.***

[redacted] It was proposed that one or two more [redacted] should be built, so that production of fertilizers could be increased.

h. It was proposed to increase the output of "Gesarol". ILLEGIB

i. There were still difficulties in the manufacture of hexachlorocyclohexane.

j. Another plant had be[redacted] phosphate by a compl[redacted] for the distillatio[redacted] be increased to three times its present level if this section could also be completed.

k. Less scrap was available for the light metals foundry.

l. The extrusion shop (Strangpresserei) had been expanded, but there was a shortage of workers.

m. The steel molding foundry (Stahlformgiesserei), which is casting parts for briquette presses, is to be closed down as part of a general efficiency program.

n. The power station achieved 101 per cent of its target in the second quarter, but has no reserve to meet emergencies.

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o. Dr. Bauer, head of research, refused to accept responsibility for the operation of the proposed large-scale aluminum oxide plant, apparently because his w[redacted] for the aluminum plant would not be availab[redacted]

p. The semi-technical plant for methylene chloride is still not working satisfactorily. It is proposed to build a plant with a capacity of 100 tons per month.

q. It is hoped to replace the platinum-rhodium catalysts (Kontakte) in the ammonia plant by cobalt catalysts.

r. The acid-proof cement made by the factory is of unsatisfactory quality, and steps will have to be taken to correct the situation.

s. The experiments to convert polyvinyl chloride to polyvinyl fluoride have not succeeded, and it has been decided that the alternative method of producing fluoride plastics, by building up a fluoride monomer into a fluoride polymer must be used after all.

t. The following investment and repair figures were given for 1951, with the comment that they were much too small - 24 million DM for repairs, 7 million DM for new equipment, and 770,000 DM for general overhaul.

u. A new 100-ton press was installed in the "Vinidur" department in the second quarter of 1951.

v. Three metallic sodium cells are now in operation (sic).

w. Production in July 1951 was the highest in the history of the factory.

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[redacted] Possibly the Vasilevska synthetic graphite plant or the Plania carbon electrode factory at Ratibor.